

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ANKARA 05526 121345Z

45

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 SS-20 HEW-08 DODE-00 AID-20 L-03

AGR-20 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 JUSE-00 NSAE-00 RSC-01

SNM-02 SY-04 TRSE-00 USIA-15 NSC-07 SCI-06 OMB-01

PA-04 PRS-01 EURE-00 DRC-01 /163 W

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5057

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR, PINT, TU

SUBJ: OPIUM POPPIES: OPPOSITION PARTIES' ATTITUDES

SUMMARY: OPPOSITION PARTIES THIS WEEK HAVE EXPRESSED (QUALIFIED) SUPPORT FOR ECEVIT GOVT'S REPEAL OF POPPY BAN. SUCH SHOW OF UNITY IS CUSTOMARY WHEN ISSUE OF NATIONALISM INVOLVED. IF IT LATER BECOMES CLEAR THAT ECEVIT GOVT HAS DAMAGED NATIONAL INTERESTS BY REPEALING BAN, OPPOSITION COULD BE EXPECTED SEIZE OPPORTUNITY TO ATTACH GOVT. WORTH NOTING THAT PARLIAMENT WAS NOT CONSULTED WHEN DECISION MADE TO LIFT BAN. END SUMMARY.

1. JUSTICE PARTY (JP):

A. PRINCIPAL OPPOSITION LEADER DEMIREL, CHAIRMAN OF JP, HAS ENDORSED REPEAL OF POPPY BAN WHILE APPARENTLY KEEPING DOOR OPEN FOR LATER CRITICISM DEPENDING ON DEVELOPMENTS.

B. ON JULY 8 DEMIREL TOLD REPORTER JP HAD ALWAYS OPPOSED
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PAGE 02 ANKARA 05526 121345Z

BAN ON POPPIES. HOWEVER, HE SAID, GOVT IN LIFTING BAN "MUST BE

ABLE TO SAFEGUARD TURKEY'S OTHER INTERESTS". IN LETTER TO FOREIGN MINISTER QUOTED IN JULY 12 PRESS, DEMIREL SAID JP HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED WHEN BAN IMPOSED OR WHEN BAN RESCINDED. REFERRING TO PROPOSAL TO SEND PARLIAMENTARY GOOD WILL MISSION TO US (ANKARA 5497), HE SAID IT WAS "A MYSTERY" WHY DECISION TO RESCIND BAN HAD TO BE EXPLAINED TO US. HE ADDED THAT "AS THE JP, WE DEEM IT A DUTY TO OPPOSE WITH ALL OUR MIGHT THE EFFORTS TO BE ENGAGED IN BY FOREIGN COUNTRIES AGAINST OUR COUNTRY" CONCERNING POPPY GROWING.

C. ON JUNE 10 MAVERICK JP DEPUTY MURAT BAYRAK CIRCULATED WRITTEN STATEMENT CALLING ON OPPOSITION PARTIES TO RESIST GOVT'S MOVE TO BREAK TIES WITH U.S. VIA RESCISSION OF POPPY BAN (ANKARA 5485). HIS STATEMENT WAS IMMEDIATELY DISAVOWED BY BOTH DEPUTY CHAIRMEN OF JP PARLIAMENTARY GROUP, WHO TERMED IT "PERSONAL". (COMMENT: BAYRAK WAS ALREADY IN DISFAVOR WITH PARTY LEADERSHIP BECAUSE ONE WEEK EARLIER HE HAD PUBLICLY CRITICIZED DEMIREL FOR BLOCKING UNITY OF RIGHTIST PARTIES. BAYRAK, ETHNIC TURK FROM YUGOSLAVIA, HAS TOLD US HE WAS CONNECTED WITH NAZIS IN YUGOSLAVIA DURING WORLD WAR II, AND HE IS CLOSELY CONNECTED WITH ALPASLAN TURKES, LEADER OF NATIONAL ACTION PARTY AND ORGANIZER OF RIGHTIST "COMMANDO" YOUTH GROUPS.)

2. DEMOCRATIC PARTY (DP): DEPUTY CHAIRMAN ONSAL TOLD PRESS JULY 10 THAT DP WELCOMED REPEAL OF POPPY BAN, CAUTIONING, HOWEVER, THAT GOVT HAD GREAT RESPONSIBILITY TO PREVENT HARM TO HUMANITY. HE ACCUSED GOVT OF HAVING "PANICKED" IN INVITING "FOREIGN COUNTRIES TO INTERFERE IN OUR DOMESTIC AFFAIRS" (APPARENTLY REFERRING TO OUTSIDE ADVICE ON CONTROL PROBLEM). HE CALLED ON GOVERNMENT TO MOVE QUICKLY TO EXPLAIN CASE TO FOREIGN PUBLIC.

3. REPUBLICAN RELIANCE PARTY (RR): IN MOST RESTRAINED STATEMENT OF ALL OPPOSITION PARTIES, RR CHAIRMAN FEYZIOUGLU WROTE LETTER TO FOREIGN MINISTER PROMISING "TO ASSIST THE GOVT WITH ALL OUR MIGHT TO OBTAIN SUCCESSFUL RESULTS FROM THE CURRENT CONTACTS AND NEGOTIATIONS ON THE POPPY ISSUE". HE CALLED FOR MAKING CLEAR TOWORLD THAT PLEDGE TO PREVENT ILLICIT TRAFFIC WILL BE FULFILLED. HE ADDED: "I SHOULD ALSO LIKE TO DRAW THE ATTENTION OF THE GOVT TO THE EVIDENT EFFORTS OF CERTAIN KNOWN QUARTERS DELIBERATELY TO MAGNIFY THE POPPY QUESTION, TO MAKE IT A SUBJECT OF POLEMICS AND T LEAD IT INTO IMPASSES IN ORDER TO SHAKE THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 ANKARA 05526 121345Z

ALLIANCES WHICH ARE IMPORTANT TO TURKEY'S EXTERNAL SECURITY". HE WARNED THAT "THE MAINTENANCE OF THE UNITY WHICH THE TURKISH NATION ALWAYS MANIFESTS ON NATIONAL CAUSES DEPENDS ON CERTAIN QUARTERS' REFRAINING FROM USING FOREIGN POLICY TOPICS FOR DOMESTIC POLICY ARRANGEMENTS".

4. COMMENT: WHEN TURKEY IS PITTED AGAINST ANOTHER COUNTRY, AS NOW, OPPOSITION IS BOUND TO SUPPORT GOVT, SINCE TO DO OTHERWISE

WOULD BE TO COURT CONDEMNATION AS "ANTI-NATIONAL". HOWEVER, STATEMENTS ALL CONTAIN RESERVATIONS, AND IT IS LIKELY THAT, AS DEMIREL TOLD AMBASSADOR SOME MONTHS AGO, OPPOSITION SOONER OR LATER WOULD SEIZE ON OPPORTUNITY TO ATTACK GOVERNMENT IF CASE COULD BE MADE THAT RESCISSION OF POPPY BAN RESULTED IN REAL DAMAGE TO ALLIANCE WITH US AND THUS TO TURKEY'S SECURITY INTERESTS.

5. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT, DESPITE FREQUENTLY HEARD ASSERTION THAT LIFTING OF BAN WAS RESPONSE TO DEMANDS OF DEMOCRACY, OPPOSITION PARTIES HAD NO VOICE IN DECISION TO RESCIND BAN. DECISION WAS MADE NOT BY PARLIAMENT BUT BY CABINET. ALTHOUGH OPPOSITION LEADERS' STATEMENTS CITED ABOVE MAKE IT QUESTIONABLE WHETHER PARLIAMENT COULD HAVE AVOIDED VOTING FOR RESCISSION, FACT REMAINS THAT ECEVIT GOVT -- FOR WHATEVER REASONS -- CHOSE NOT TO CONSULT PARLIAMENT AND THEREBY TOOK FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACTION.
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